

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9091

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SUBJECT: IRISH NEWSPAPERS REPORT WILLIAM V. SHANNON NEW
AMBASSADOR TO IRELAND

1. UNDER THE FIRST PAGE HEADLINE "NEWSMAN NEXT U.S. ENVOY,"
IRISH TIMES REPORTS THAT WILLIAM V. SHANNON OF THE
NEW YORK TIMES WILL BE THE NEXT U.S. AMBASSADOR TO IRELAND.
WITH THE EXCEPTION OF LENGTHY QUOTATION FROM A RECENT
NEW YORK TIMES EDITORIAL PIECE, THE FOLLOWING IS THE FULL
TEXT OF THE IRISH TIMES ARTICLE:

2. BEGIN QUOTE: THE NEXT UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO
IRELAND IS ALMOST CERTAIN TO BE MR. WILLIAM V. SHANNON, A
VICE PRESIDENT OF THE NEW YORK TIMES NEWSPAPER AND CURRENTLY
ITS BUREAU CHIEF IN WASHINGTON.

SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY ANNOUNCED IN WASHINGTON YESTERDAY
THAT MR. SHANNON WAS PRESIDENT CARTER'S CHOICE FOR IRELAND.
HE WOULD SUCCEED MR. WALTER J.P. CURLEY, WHO HAS JUST
RETURNED TO HIS NATIVE NEW YORK AFTER SERVING IN DUBLIN
FOR EXACTLY TWO YEARS.

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MR. SHANNON IS AN UNUSUAL APPOINTMENT, HAVING HAD NO
DIRECT POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT AND BEING KNOWN PRIMARILY
AS A JOURNALIST AND AUTHOR OF DISTINCTION. HE WON A
PULITZER PRIZE FOR A BESTSELLING BOOK ON THE LIFE OF THE
LATE SENATOR ROBERT KENNEDY AND A JOURNALISM AWARD FOR
AN ARTICLE ON SENATOR JOE MCCARTHY, HEAD OF THE
UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE IN WASHINGTON IN THE

1950'S.

HE IS ALSO THE AUTHOR OF "THE AMERICAN IRISH: A POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PORTRAIT," WHICH RAN TO SEVERAL EDITIONS AND CONFIRMED MR. SHANNON'S REPUTATION AS THE FOREMOST AUTHORITY ON THE SUBJECT. LAST YEAR, HE CONTRIBUTED AN ARTICLE ON IRISH-AMERICAN POLITICS FOR A SPECIAL REPORT IN THE IRISH TIMES CELEBRATING THE AMERICAN BICENTENNIAL.

SEAN CRONIN WRITES FROM NEW YORK: MR. SHANNON, A NATIVE OF MASSACHUSETTS, IS A FREQUENT COMMENTATOR ON IRISH AFFAIRS. LAST TUESDAY HE WROTE AN EDITORIAL PIECE CALLED "LIGHT AND SHADOW IN ULSTER" FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES ON THE GENERAL STRIKE. END QUOTE.

3. THE IRISH PRESS ALSO CARRIED THE STORY ON PAGE ONE UNDER THE HEADING: "OUR NEW U.S. ENVOY HAS CLARE ROOTS". FULL TEXT FOLLOWS:

4. BEGIN QUOTE: MR. WILLIAM V. SHANNON, AN AUTHOR AND A JOURNALIST WITH THE NEW YORK TIMES, WILL BE THE NEW U.S. AMBASSADOR TO IRELAND, SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY ANNOUNCED IN WASHINGTON YESTERDAY.

SPEAKING TO THE IRISH PRESS FROM NEW YORK LAST NIGHT, MR. SHANNON SAID THAT HE WAS AWARE THAT HE WAS BEING CONSIDERED FOR THE POST BY PRESIDENT CARTER, BUT HE HAD RECEIVED NO OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION FROM THE WHITE HOUSE ABOUT HIS APPOINTMENT.

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HOWEVER, SENATOR KENNEDY'S PRESS SECRETARY CONFIRMED THAT MR. SHANNON WOULD BE THE NEW AMBASSADOR.

MR. SHANNON, 49, WHO WAS BORN IN WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS, HAS CLOSE CONNECTIONS WITH IRELAND. HIS FATHER WAS BORN IN DOOLIN, COUNTY CLARE, AND HIS MOTHER WAS BORN IN BALLYVAUGHAN, COUNTY CLARE.

(INNERQUOTE) I REALLY LOVE IRELAND AND IT WOULD BE A GREAT HONOR TO SERVE AS AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IN DUBLIN (END INNERQUOTE), SAID MR. SHANNON.

HE HAS VISITED IRELAND A NUMBER OF TIMES, AND WAS HERE LAST SUMMER (INNERQUOTE) MY FAMILY CAME WITH ME TO IRELAND AND WE TOOK A HORSEDRAWN CARAVAN FROM WESTPORT HOUSE AND TOURED ALL AROUND THE WEST LAST SUMMER. IT WAS REALLY LOVELY (END INNERQUOTE), SAID MR. SHANNON.

HE HAS BEEN A DIRECTOR OF THE AMERICAN-IRISH FOUNDATION SINCE 1969, AND HE IS CHAIRMAN OF THE FOUNDATION'S LITERARY AWARDS COMMITTEE, WHICH GIVES AN ANNUAL PRIZE OF OVER THREE THOUSAND POUNDS TO AN IRISH WRITER.

MR. SHANNON IS A WELL-KNOWN WRITER WHO HAS WRITTEN A BIOGRAPHY OF ROBERT KENNEDY ENTITLED "THE HEIR APPARENT," AS WELL AS A BOOK ABOUT THE WATERGATE AFFAIR CALLED "THEY COULD NOT TRUST THE KING".

HIS BEST-KNOWN BOOK, HOWEVER, IS "THE AMERICAN IRISH" A STUDY OF THE IRISH COMMUNITY IN AMERICA AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE POLITICAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE U.S. IT WAS PUBLISHED IN 1964, BUT IS STILL IN PRINT ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC.

HE WILL NOT ARRIVE UNTIL JULY. (INNERQUOTE) IF I AM UNCLASSIFIED

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APPOINTED BY MR. CARTER I WILL THEN HAVE TO BE CONFIRMED BY THE SENATE, WHO WILL VOTE ON MY APPOINTMENT. I WILL THEN HAVE BRIEFING SESSIONS FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT, SO IT WILL BE TWO MONTHS OR MORE, POSSIBLY EARLY JULY, BEFORE I COULD HOPE TO BE IN IRELAND (END INNERQUOTE). MR. SHANNON SAID THAT HIS WIFE, THE FORMER ELIZABETH MCNEELY, ALSO HAD CONNECTIONS WITH IRELAND. HER FAMILY CAME TO AMERICA FROM NEWRY, COUNTY DOWN, IN THE PAST CENTURY.

THE COUPLE HAVE THREE CHILDREN, LIAM 14, CHRISTOPHER 9, AND DAVID 5. END QUOTE. RENDAHL

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